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Using Law and Education to Make Human Rights Real in Women's Real Lives

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Confronting Global Gender Justice

Women's lives, human rights

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12 Using law and education to make human rights real in women's real lives

Nancy Chi Cantalupo

That women have voluntarily engaged law at all is a triumph of determination over experience. It has not been an act of faith. . . . Treacherous and uncertain and alien and slow, law has not been women's instrument of choice. Their view seems to be that law should not be let off the hook, is too powerful to be ignored, and is better than violence— if not by much.

(MacKinnon 1991: 1234)

Although the above quotation is excerpted from an article primarily concerned with United States domestic law on women's rights, it is equally applicable to women's rights in a more international "human rights" context. Since the late 1980s at least, international feminist lawyers have been articulating a series of problems with the usefulness of international law in general and international human rights law in particular for improving the real lives of real women. In the nearly two decades since then, women lawyers and activists throughout the world have been slowly chipping away at these problems. They have not only made remarkable progress but they have transformed aspects of human rights law and activism beyond their applicability to women and gender alone.

As the idea of using human rights laws and legal approaches to address women's rights has expanded, however, the dilemma described by MacKinnon continues to affect opinions about whether relying on the law to create beneficial social and political change for women is worthwhile. For instance, at the 2007 annual conference for the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), the only sessions dealing explicitly with human rights laws and principles in the context of gender questioned the role of human rights law in advancing women's human rights in women's real lives more than they embraced using the law for this purpose (NWSA 2007: 113). Yet, the same sessions also acknowledge implicitly the power of international human rights laws and principles (NWSA 2007: 113).

Student approaches can reflect this dilemma, as well. For instance, in classes that I teach with two different groups of students, undergraduate women's studies and international affairs students, as well as law students, students are often suspicious of the role that law and legal theory, especially international law and legal theory, play in women's everyday lives, or they are hypercritical and overly

focused on the obstacles to changing the law so it will better support women's human rights. In addition, students' understanding of these obstacles can be overblown or inaccurate, and they are generally unaware of either the methods that have been created to overcome those obstacles or the transformative effects of those methods. Students are thereby discouraged from seeing the ways in which they also can use the law to promote women's human rights and seek solutions to the problems that prevent women's rights from being fully realized.

From an educational standpoint, these dynamics are problematic because they may give students an unbalanced or incomplete view of women's human rights generally. From an activist perspective, they are downright distressing because they discourage students from joining efforts towards greater actualization of women's human rights in women's everyday lives or, if students do join those efforts, cause them to discount or dismiss a powerful factor in the success of those efforts. In an attempt to address these problematic phenomena, this chapter discusses a series of pedagogical strategies designed to promote students' abilities to view human rights law as an instrument of beneficial change for women, although not the only or a perfect one. Drawing from a group of courses designed to help create lawyers, potential lawyers, activists, and citizens who understand the opportunities and limits of human rights law in the context of gender, this chapter explores ways to encourage students to use the law in effective ways that will improve the everyday lives of real women and to see the opportunities to do this that constantly surround them.

Critical legal thinking and theorizing to identify and address women's human rights problems

Creating change must begin with proper identification of the problems, a process that is always more difficult than anticipated. In my classes, students experience a range of difficulties in identifying and analyzing the problems, many of which are based in myths or misunderstandings about women's human rights law (both domestic and international) and related issues. Among the undergraduates, in particular, there is only a partial understanding of how the law actually structures women's everyday lives and the key role that it plays in patriarchal systems. Among the law students, there is the opposite tendency to limit one's perspective to the law alone and to forget that law is closely linked to and imbued with politics, whether they be electoral, identity, or some other kind. Moreover, both groups share a number of myths and misconceptions, including the idea that human rights is an international, but not a domestic, issue, as well as a lack of awareness of how the law itself is a patriarchal institution, and quite an obstinate one at that.

None of these approaches is accurate and, more importantly, none of them is particularly effective in promoting women's human rights in a way that actualizes those rights in the real lives of women. Therefore, the first pedagogical task is to shift these understandings in a more politically useful direction by making visible the law's traditionally oppressive role in women's lives and demonstrating how women's human rights activists and attorneys have created new legal

approaches that seek to dismantle this oppressive role in a manner that will improve women's lives.

In an undergraduate course that I developed and teach with Meredith Rathbone, an attorney colleague, virtually the entire course is built around encouraging students to view the law itself from a critical viewpoint. Entitled "Gender, Oppression, Liberation and Global Laws," "Gender and Global Laws" for short, the course looks at how the law has been used in the context of gender as a tool of oppression and as a tool of liberation and assesses law's effectiveness as a tool for creating social and political change for women. Ultimately, the central lesson and skill we hope our students will learn and develop is how to examine the law critically to see if, in any given situation, it can help or hurt women, and whether it is the best way to achieve beneficial change for women. With an awareness of the fact that many of these students take the course because they are considering or have already decided to go to law school, we have designed the course in the hopes that both the future lawyers and those not intending to become lawyers will see the opportunities and develop some skills to promote women's human rights in and out of the legal profession.

Talking about every method used to encourage students to be critical about the law as a change agent in the context of gender is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it is possible to use an example or two to give a flavor of how the course seeks to achieve its goals. For instance, one of the earlier topics of the course deals with the institution of marriage and the role the law plays in structuring this key institution. Marriage and family law is one of the areas where the law is most involved in people's, especially women's, everyday lives, yet it is paradoxically also one of the places where the law is most invisible to those who do not think critically about it. Our experience suggests that the undergraduates who take our classes understand that the law is important to women on relatively discreet issues such as domestic violence, but they are completely unaware of the role that legal institutions, particularly of marriage, play and have played in structuring patriarchal societies and insuring women's subjugation to male authority.

For these reasons, we begin by introducing students to legal sources that demonstrate how marriage operates to control women's reproduction and economic status by focusing on what marriage meant for women's legal status under the common law principles inherited by the United States and other common law countries from England. In the U.S., prior to the legal reforms of marriage that began in the mid-1800s, when a woman and a man got married, for legal purposes they became one person, and that person was the man (*Gubernat* 1995: 132). Women lost all ability to own property, to contract, and to engage in other economic activities. In case this extinguishment of their legal personhood gave women incentives to refuse to marry, laws like those dealing with the naming of children made sure marriage seemed a more attractive alternative to, for instance, risking bearing a child "out of wedlock." In light of the sexual vulnerability of women who lived without a man's "protection" and the lack of reliable birth control at the time, naming laws ensuring that children born to unmarried

women would be labeled as bastards, denied property, and otherwise stigmatized (Gubemat 1995) could be extremely powerful ways to encourage women to marry despite the institution's drawbacks.

This remains an amazingly hidden history and, although it may seem as if a century and a half of legal reform in the U.S. would make it largely irrelevant, traces of this history remain to the present day and make it disturbingly relevant here and now. In addition, in many countries, women are still fighting the battles that U.S. women began in a much earlier period. By drawing attention to the history of marriage in the U.S. and linking it conceptually to current laws, both foreign and domestic, the course demonstrates how marriage and the law are intertwined in such a way as to form a crucial building block of patriarchal oppression.

Not to lose a full half of the picture, however, the course also demonstrates the ways in which marriage as a legal institution has acted and continues to act as a tool of oppression in other contexts. By examining the history of anti-miscegenation laws, the course introduces students to materials that contrast laws made to forbid marriage between blacks and whites (Roldan 1933; *Loving* 1967), versus laws that encouraged white men to marry propertied Native American women and Chicanas (Berger 1997). Asking students to think through the reasons behind these different approaches makes visible the role marriage law has played in racial subjugation in the U.S., by adopting and building upon the oppressive tactics used in the context of gender, to insure that property and power were concentrated in the hands of white men.

Although it is surprising how much many law students can benefit from the same type of critical focus on the law that we encourage in "Gender and Global Laws," in general, a different invisibility problem operates among many of the law students I have taught or with whom I've conversed about women's human rights. These students can focus on the law almost exclusively, often ignoring the connections between law and politics, as well as the ways in which the law influences everyday life as much through its silences or failures to act as it does through its pronouncements and affirmative acts (Skwiot 2008).

In fact, silences and failures to act are crucial, especially in the context of gender. Therefore, it is important to find ways to make them as visible as the pronouncements and affirmative acts. Accordingly, in a law school course entitled "International Women's Human Rights," I spend a lot of time focusing on the development of certain legal theories that highlight the law's tendency to be silent or inactive, to the detriment of women's human rights, and the efforts of women's rights attorneys and activists to hold the law and those who make and enforce the law accountable for these failures.

One of the theories that is particularly helpful in making these dynamics visible is what I think of as the feminist theory of state responsibility. This theory and its development can be attributed in large part to women's human rights activists and attorneys and addresses one of the most difficult theoretical and practical problems of invisibility and obstacles to achieving women's human rights. As such, it is an extremely helpful example for making visible two generally invisible

phenomena: (1) how the law's silences and failures to act can make it very difficult to use the law to protect and promote women's human rights, and (2) how determined activists can intervene, surface the silences and failures, and create new theories that have truly transformative powers.

In international law, the invisibility of women and gender is more complicated than just that women are rarely heads of state or appointed to international bodies, although these are important factors. In fact, women and gender are marginalized by the very structure of international law (Charlesworth et al. 1991). International law deals with nation-states and their behaviors, relationships, rights, and obligations vis-à-vis each other. Traditionally, private individuals are not included at all in this structure. Granted, this approach has changed somewhat because international human rights law assumes that a state can be obligated to treat its own citizens in a certain way and that private individuals may complain about violations of their rights by states to an international tribunal.

However, protecting women's human rights is still more difficult under this structure. For one thing, there is a relative absence of articulated rights in international human rights treaties that apply to how women experience rights violations. For another, violations of men's human rights are more likely to occur in the public sphere at the hands of the state or state actors. Furthermore, because international law is the law of states, it is public law, and for a state to have violated an individual's human rights, the state itself must be responsible in some way for the violation. Women's rights are most often violated by private actors in the private sphere, making those rights hard, if not impossible, to redress under traditional international legal theories and approaches.

The best example of these phenomena is violence against women. Violence against women is not explicitly named as a violation of women's human rights in any international treaty, including the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. While this problem has been addressed through interpretation and declarations by international bodies (CEDAW 1992; DEVAW 1993), this occurred relatively recently and largely as a result of activism by the global women's movement. In addition, these declarations, interpretations, and even a few new treaties on violence against women cannot make up for the silence on violence against women in the older, more established treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which enjoy more signatories, wider acceptance by the international community, and greater effectiveness as human rights law. Under these older treaties, forms of violence against women such as domestic violence present a stark state responsibility problem. A domestic violence survivor's human rights are most often being violated by her husband, a private individual who is not being violent towards his wife at the urging of the state or to fulfill any state purpose.

As can be seen from this example, the traditional approach to state responsibility presents a multilayered problem of numerous silences and failures to act, and in reality leaves the vast majority of the human rights violations that women experience totally invisible to and unaddressed by international law. Women's human rights activists and attorneys have therefore set about changing

this traditional approach by making the state's silences and failures to act themselves violations of international law.

Dorothy Thomas and Michele Beasley were two of the earliest women's human rights activists to articulate this new approach. In an article entitled "Domestic Violence as a Human Rights Issue," they use the *Velasquez Rodriguez* case decided by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to advance a theory under which a state can be held responsible for human rights violations committed by a private person (Beasley and Thomas 1995).

In the *Velasquez Rodriguez* case, the Inter-American Court on Human Rights held Honduras responsible for violating the American Convention on Human Rights due to disappearances of citizens suspected to be carried out by the Honduras military. With only circumstantial evidence of the military's involvement, the Court held that Honduras was responsible even if it did not directly carry out the disappearances. Because the state was not taking any action to prevent, investigate, or punish whoever was carrying out the disappearances, the Court said, Honduras was condoning and encouraging such violence and was indirectly responsible for it (*Velasquez* 1988).

Thomas and Beasley took the state obligation to prevent, investigate, and punish created by *Velasquez* and applied it to domestic violence. Because domestic violence is overwhelmingly directed at women, they said, states that fail to prevent, investigate, and punish domestic violence commit sex discrimination in violation of human rights treaties. By not preventing, investigating, and punishing private actors who are committing crimes, the state is condoning and encouraging that harm. Furthermore, because the state is condoning and encouraging criminal activity that overwhelmingly harms one sex, its failure to act is discriminatory on the basis of sex. Therefore, domestic violence is a violation of women's human rights for which states are responsible under every treaty that prohibits sex discrimination (Beasley and Thomas 1995).

This theory of state responsibility has been increasingly adopted by international courts and tribunals. Most close to home, the Inter-American Commission applied it in a case called *Maria da Penha v. Brazil* (*Maria da Penha* 2000), and is currently considering a case against the United States. The case against the United States has been brought by Jessica Gonzales, a woman whose abusive husband kidnapped and killed their three young daughters. Ms. Gonzales was separated from her husband and had a civil protection order that directed police to arrest her husband if he violated its terms. On the night of the murders, Mr. Gonzales kidnapped his three daughters, and the police refused to enforce the CPO, despite Ms. Gonzales's frequent and increasingly urgent pleas for their help. Mr. Gonzales was eventually shot and killed by police when he opened fire on the police station. Ms. Gonzales sued the police department for violations of her due process rights under the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Supreme Court denied her claim, saying that there is no due process right to enforcement of a civil protection order (*Castle Rock* 2005).

Ms. Gonzales has now filed a complaint at the Inter-American Commission and prevailed on part of her claims (*Gonzales* 2007). If she wins her case, which I expect

she will, the international approach to state responsibility, applied to U.S. facts, will stand in stark contrast to the prevailing approach used by our own lawmakers.

As such, the *Gonzales* case is a wonderful teaching tool. First, it shows the links between legal theories and women's lives, and not only how theories can be changed and then applied to fix real problems for real women, but also how it is sometimes necessary to deal with the theoretical in order to affect the practical. Second, the state responsibility discussion, and the use of the *Gonzales* case to illustrate it, are helpful in dealing with other persistent myths held by students, and undoubtedly many others, about women's human rights. For instance, there is a persistent attitude among students that human rights are an international, but not a domestic, issue. Inherent in these attitudes are two assumptions: (1) that the United States is far ahead of the rest of the world when it comes to human rights, including women's rights; and (2) that the United States' legal approach to rights is therefore truer or better than those of the rest of the world. The *Gonzales* case debunks both of these ideas, by showing that the United States' is only one legal approach of many and that the United States' approach is in fact one that is damaging to women and actually out of step with the rest of the world's. By contrasting the definitions of state responsibility increasingly used by international tribunals with the definitions of our own Supreme Court, *Gonzales* demonstrates that human rights violations are not something that only happen in other countries and that there is nothing inherently "true" or "right" about the legal choices and theories that have developed in the United States.

Promoting women's human rights through building practical skills for activism

As powerful as the theoretical, critical, and analytical thinking encouraged by such methods as examining the history and purposes behind the legal institution of marriage and the feminist legal theory of state responsibility can be, educating students to promote women's human rights in a way that makes those rights real for real women cannot just stop there. Instead, if we believe in using education to create activists and citizens who not only understand the opportunities and limits of human rights law in the context of gender, but also will use the law in effective ways that will improve the everyday lives of real women, we must incorporate practical training and skill building in women's human rights coursework.

Once again, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to give more than a taste of some of the pedagogical tools that can be used to introduce students to practical issues and skills that are helpful in the world of women's human rights activism. In addition, such strategies vary considerably based on the student population and inter-discipline in which the course is taught, even more so than the aforementioned strategies designed to encourage critical thinking. In the undergraduate context, students are often more diverse in terms of educational focus, plans for their lives post-graduation, and certainty about those plans than are law students. In addition, even the ones who are pre-professionally oriented are less focused on skill-acquisition or how their classroom learning and work life (post-graduation)

might be linked than students seeking to enter a profession. Therefore, assignments and class activities designed to encourage activism on women's human rights can be unique in students' experiences, be broader in focus and allow for more creativity than some of the strategies used in the law school context. For instance, in "Gender and Global Laws," my co-teacher designed an assignment in which students take a particular issue discussed in the class and construct an "Action Plan" for how they would try to create beneficial social and political changes for women and/or other gender minorities on that issue. The assignment is explicit that the action plan need not choose a legal method to create change, and in the past students have presented plans ranging from improving stalking legislation to creating a blueprint for a federal subsidized housing program for domestic violence survivors to starting an educational program responding to sexual assault on college campuses.

In contrast, as students studying to enter a profession, law students are naturally thinking to some extent about how to translate what they are learning in the classroom to what they hope to do out of the classroom. Nevertheless, their views on what they can do with the knowledge gained in the classroom is often limited to such established lawyering activities as engaging in courtroom litigation or drafting legal documents, so the challenge is to get them to think about myriad options for using the law outside those traditional legal settings, and the connections between the two approaches. A course designed to encourage activism must seek to broaden their views on how to use their knowledge of the law, both as lawyers expanding their skills beyond traditional lawyering skills or adapting and using traditional skills in new settings, and as citizens with unique and powerful skills who want to create positive change in the area of women's human rights.

This dual purpose means designing course assignments and activities that encourage students to think beyond what they will do in paid legal practice or other employment, as well as to develop skills that will be helpful in legal practice related to promoting women's human rights. Both of these goals are related in the sense that legal skills and knowledge can be quite helpful in non-legal activist settings, while women's human rights lawyers must often have a range of skills that include, but are not limited to, traditional legal skills, because so much of the promotion of women's human rights uses the law outside courtrooms, legislatures, and other legal bodies.

Returning to the example of *Gonzales*, for instance, winning the case will only be the first part of the battle for it to mean anything to real women, most specifically domestic violence survivors holding civil protection orders in the United States. Because the Inter-American Commission, like most international tribunals, has little enforcement power, the power of a case like *Gonzales* will primarily be based in its use as a political tool. Used effectively, the case could help lead to changes in U.S. law by building support for a different approach to state responsibility; changes which will have a real effect on women's lives.

For these reasons, use of the *Gonzales* case need not and indeed should not be limited to teaching the legal theory of state responsibility. Instead, a course

designed to encourage student activism should also ask students to think about how to maximize the persuasive impact of the case as a political organizing tool. Using examples from organizations like Equality Now (Equality Now 2008), classes can discuss such methods as how to create media campaigns about the case and its usefulness as a lobbying tool.

For example, in my International Women's Human Rights class, I assign a previous U.S. Supreme Court case that presents similar state responsibility issues as *Gonzales* (*United States* 2000), and split the class into two parts. One group is instructed to act as lawyers for the complaining woman in bringing her case before an international tribunal. They are encouraged to think about such traditional lawyering issues as which tribunal to choose (based on factors like the treaties to which the United States is a party and the effectiveness of the remedies the tribunal can provide), which claims they could bring, and how they would argue their case before the tribunal. The other group acts as members of a women's non-profit or NGO using the case as a grassroots organizing tool, and they are expected to think through and create ways to use the case in such non-legal fora as the media, public education campaigns, citizen action (protest marches, letter-writing campaigns, boycotts, etc.), and the formation of non-profit organizations. In this way, students both apply traditional legal skills in the women's human rights arena and get some practice thinking about the kinds of non-legal skills that are useful to both lawyers and activists in the field.

Of course, in traditional classroom-based seminar courses such as both of those discussed thus far, there are limits to the skills-building pedagogical methods that can be used. Therefore, it is important to consider methods that reach beyond the traditional classroom through combined theoretical and practical pedagogies used in various forms of experiential education such as service-learning in the undergraduate context and clinical education in the law school context. These methods generally combine some sort of unpaid work experience in a public interest area (sometimes under the supervision of a person outside the university faculty, sometimes under faculty supervision, and sometimes under a combination of the two) with academic work in a particular subject or practice area and some reflective method to link the classroom and work experience (National Service Learning Clearinghouse 2008; Ogilvy 2006). As such, just by virtue of the experiential aspect of this type of coursework, students are contributing their volunteer labor to the activist work being undertaken by the organization or project where they are working. However, beyond just this work, these courses are generally designed to inspire students to engage in such work even after the course is complete.

From a women's human rights lawyering perspective, experiential education is particularly important. This is true even in a domestic context and when the fight for these rights manifests in the most traditionally legal way (like in the *Gonzales* case), because the promotion of women's human rights requires so much work that is essentially political, involving organizing and coalition-building, as a partner, a preface, or a predicate to the legal work. Common sense and experience recognize that organizing, media campaigns, and other such political methods

require specific skills that are more easily taught and more effectively learned through experiential education.

In an international context, this is even more true, since it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to understand and promote women's human rights ethically and effectively in a particular local setting when sitting in a classroom or working in a location far removed from that setting. Especially if students and teachers are dealing with women's human rights topics and the local manifestations of those topics in a context where the students and teachers are outsiders, the kind of activist role they can take will be and should be limited by their outsider status.

For example, as a law student in the International Women's Human Rights Clinic at Georgetown University Law Center, I participated in a fact-finding mission on domestic violence in Ghana. Students and faculty traveled for one week to Ghana to conduct the trip. The time prior to the trip was spent preparing by conducting preliminary research on the topic, practicing such skills as interviewing in a simulated setting, and learning all the students could about Ghana and its legal system. The time after the trip was spent writing a human rights report with the group's conclusions regarding the human rights violations it investigated (Cantalupo et al. 2006). As the final report demonstrates, the fact that many domestic violence cases in Ghana are "mediated," often without the full agreement of the domestic violence survivor, was an issue of grave concern to the fact-finding team (Cantalupo et al. 2006: 576–578), and one that emerged as a problem as early as the very first day of interviews conducted in Ghana. Yet the team was completely unaware when preparing for the trip in the United States of the mediation phenomenon. Had the students and faculty simply studied the issues from the United States, this crucial insight about how women's human rights in Ghana were being violated would never have been understood.

Similar lessons have emerged from my most recent teaching experience. I have recently begun teaching and supervising American law students in an intensive summer session experiential learning course focused on women's rights in China. In the course, the students conduct international and comparative research projects for women's NGOs in China through a combination of research in the United States and in China.

The semester begins with an intensive seminar, held primarily in the United States, where the students learn as much as possible about Chinese law, the status of women and girls in China, and international and comparative laws on women's human rights. Next, they travel to China for approximately three weeks to interview various experts and to learn about the laws and surrounding circumstances affecting women in China in their project area (such as sex discrimination in employment or domestic violence). Based on the understanding they develop of how that particular women's rights issue manifests in China, the students then research legal approaches used in other countries to address similar women's rights problems. They write a final report including their understanding of the situation in China and the results of their comparative research and give that report to the partner NGO to use in its local work to address women's rights. Along the way,

they learn and practice many of the skills needed by human rights and rule of law attorneys.

As I learned as a student in Ghana, learning about the complexities of such a different country and legal system from so far away and almost entirely from an academic, outsider's perspective was insufficient to truly understand the situation in China or to make our project work useful to our partners. The law in particular is so different between the United States and China that it feels nearly unknowable from halfway around the world. While a mere three weeks in China was certainly insufficient to close this gap, the gap was made significantly smaller by the students' having access to both the knowledge and perspectives of experts inside China.

Moreover, the nuanced understanding of how these women's issues manifest in China is absolutely necessary to the comparative stage of the students' research. Without this understanding, students cannot focus on the comparative legal approaches that will be most useful to addressing the issues in China. For instance, one of the issues that emerged in the context of women and employment is that there are significant evidentiary difficulties to women proving that they have been victims of sex discrimination in the workplace, including gaps in Chinese contract law, weak or non-existent subpoena powers on the parts of courts, and a lack of protection for plaintiffs and witnesses against retaliation. Like the situation with mediation of domestic violence cases in Ghana, this issue was not clear to us when we were simply reading about Chinese women's employment issues while in the United States. However, once we understood it, the students could draw from the extensive evidentiary rules that have developed in the United States related to cases involving discrimination in employment.

In addition, the comparative research portion of the course compels students to link and critically assess different legal approaches, not just uncritically to believe their own country's approach is the best. Therefore, a final lesson that emerges from the course is an enhanced ability to reflect on the merits and demerits of our own laws and the approaches taken to these issues in the United States. We have hardly solved all the problems related to these issues in our own country, and China's differences from the United States can cause us to think more critically about the ways we in the U.S. have addressed these same problems, to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of our approaches, and to create improvements in our own laws.

Ultimately, all of these courses end with the same basic lesson: that law, both domestic and international, is merely one tool among many that can be used to improve the lives of women. Understanding that the law has often operated more to oppress women than to liberate them and learning to critically analyze and assess its advantages and disadvantages as a tool of beneficial social and political change can help one to use it most effectively. Demonstrating how knotty theoretical problems with damaging practical effects for women can be changed through creating transformative legal theories shows the link between theory and actualizing women's human rights. Focusing on a case like *Gonzales* and encouraging students to think about applications of human rights law here in the United

States helps give students ways to make international human rights laws and norms relevant here and encourages them to be activists around these issues even in their own backyards. Finally, providing opportunities not just to study but also to experience working on these issues, both domestically and internationally, gives students varying degrees of practice and builds important skills for activism in a range of contexts. These are just a few strategies for encouraging students not only to "think globally" but also to "act locally" and "act globally" to make human rights real in women's real lives.

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